

APPENDIX G: Enforcement of State of Alaska Snowmobile (Snowmachine) Laws In Denali National Park and Preserve

Denali National Park and Preserve reserves the right to enforce State of Alaska laws with respect to the operation of snowmobiles (snowmachines) within its jurisdiction under federal regulations allowing for assimilation of state statutes. National Park Rangers can enforce all necessary and applicable state regulations pertaining to the operation of snowmobiles under 36 CFR 2.18 (b) “state law is applicable.”

The following is a summary of relevant state law regarding snowmobiles. Not all regulations are included here, only those relevant to their management in Denali National Park and Preserve.

Summary of Alaska Snowmobile (Snowmachine) Laws

Registration: Snowmobiles must be registered every two years (\$10 fee). 13 AAC 70.160

Licensing: Drivers must be licensed to operate a snowmobile on public property.

Age Restrictions: Drivers must be 16 years old [and licensed] to operate on public property.

1. Applicability of Regulations; Parental Responsibility (13 AAC 02.430)

_____ (a) No parent or guardian may authorize or knowingly permit a child to violate a provision of sections 430 - 455 of this chapter.

_____ (b) Every person operating a snowmobile or other off-highway vehicle upon a highway has the rights and is subject to the duties applicable to the driver of any other vehicle under this chapter, except as otherwise provided in sections 430 - 455 of this chapter, and except as to those provisions of this chapter which by their nature have no application.

Safety Education: No requirement by law.

Day/Night Restrictions: Night driving allowed only on the right-hand side of highway in same direction as traffic in nearest lane.

Alcohol: Driving while intoxicated (.10%) is a crime. Youth (ages 14-21) who consume alcohol or possess while operating can lose future driving privileges.

Liability: Immunity for owners of unimproved land; no inherent risks law.

Safety Equipment Required: Lights and Reflectors, Brakes, Throttle, Muffler/Emission Control System, Other Equipment: snow flap, cowling over moving parts, rigid tow bar, and spark arrester. Also, no passengers without special seat.

1. Lights and Reflectors (13 AAC 04.400):

(a) A snowmobile or other off-highway vehicle which is driven during the times when lights are required by sec. 10 of this chapter must be equipped with at least one headlight, aimed and of sufficient intensity to reveal persons and vehicles at a distance of at least 100 feet ahead under normal atmospheric conditions.

(b) A snowmobile or other off-highway vehicle must be equipped with one red light, one stop-signal light and one red reflector, which must be mounted upon the rear or rear cowling of the vehicle. The lights must be visible from a distance of at least 1000 feet to the rear. The reflector must be visible from a distance of at least 600 feet to the rear when directly in front of the lawful lower beams of the headlights on a motor vehicle other than a snowmobile or an off-highway vehicle.

2. Brakes (13 AAC 04.405):

A snowmobile or other off-highway vehicle must be equipped with brakes which will control the movement, stop, and hold the vehicle under normal driving conditions on any grade upon which it normally may be driven, and under all conditions of loading.

3. Throttle (13 AAC 04.410):

A snowmobile or other off-highway vehicle operated by hand controls must be equipped with a throttle or idle spring in good working condition which, when released by hand, will return the engine speed to idle, close the carburetor, and disengage the clutch.

4. Mufflers and Emission-Control Systems (13 AAC 04.415):

(a) A snowmobile or other off-highway vehicle must be equipped with a carburetor intake, exhaust muffler, and an emission-control system in good working order, and may not use a muffler cutout, bypass or other similar device.

5. Other Equipment (13 AAC 04.420):

(a) The following equipment is required on a snowmobile or other off-highway vehicle: (1) a rear snowflap installed to deflect downward a cleat or other object or material which may be thrown by the track or wheels; (2) a protective cowling/shield over all moving parts; (3) reflectors placed on the sides or side cowling which meet the standards established by the Society of Automotive Engineers in effect on the effective date of this section; (4) when towing a sled or other object, a rigid drawbar no greater than 10 feet in length; and (5) a spark arrester.

Note - Copies of these standards may be obtained from Society of Automotive Engineers, Inc., 400 Commonwealth Drive, Lorendale, Pennsylvania 15096

Operation in Rights of Way: Subject to multiple restrictions, a snowmobile may drive on the shoulder or across a road. No access to a Controlled Access Facility.

_____ (a) A snowmobile or an off-highway vehicle may be driven on a roadway or shoulder of a highway only under the following circumstances:

_____ (1) when crossing a highway as provided in (f) of this section, or when traversing a bridge or culvert on a highway, but then only by driving at the extreme right-hand edge of the bridge or culvert and only when the traverse can be completed with safety and without interfering with other traffic on the highway;

_____ (2) when use of the highway by other motor vehicles is impossible because of snow or ice accumulation or other natural conditions or when the highway is posted or otherwise designated as being open to travel by off-highway vehicles;

_____ (3) when highway driving is authorized by an authority having jurisdiction over the highway, but only in accordance with restrictions which may be imposed by that authority with regard to highway use; or

_____ (4) when driven on the right-of-way of a highway which is not a controlled-access highway, outside the roadway or shoulder, and no closer than three feet from the nearest edge of the roadway; night driving may be only on the right-hand side of the highway and in the same direction as the highway motor vehicle traffic in the nearest lane of the roadway; no person may drive an off-highway vehicle within the area dividing the roadways of a divided highway, except to cross the highway as provided in (f) of this section.

(f) A snowmobile or an off-highway vehicle may make a direct crossing of a highway if

_____ (1) the crossing is made approximately at a right angle to the highway and at a location where visibility along the highway in both directions is clear for a sufficient distance to assure safety, and the crossing can be completed safely and without interfering with other traffic on the highway; and

_____ (2) the vehicle is brought to a complete stop before crossing the shoulder or roadway, and the driver yields the right-of-way to all traffic on the highway.

DEFINITIONS (13 AAC 02.455):

In Chapters 02, 04, 06, and 08 of this title, and in AS 28, unless otherwise provided

(9) “controlled-access highway” means every highway, street, or roadway where access to or from the highway is determined by the public authority having jurisdiction over the highway, street or roadway;

(10) “cowling” means the forward or rear portion of a snowmobile surrounding the motor and clutch assembly;

(22) “laned roadway” means a roadway which is divided into two or more clearly marked lanes for vehicular traffic;

(30) “off-highway vehicle” means a vehicle designed or adapted for cross-country operation over unimproved terrain, ice or snow, and which has been declared by its owner at the time of registration and determined by the department to be unsuitable for general highway use, although the vehicle may make incidental use of a highway as provided in this title; it does not include implements of husbandry and special mobile equipment;

(49) “snowmobile” means a motor vehicle designed to travel over ice or snow, and supported in part by skis, belts, cleats, or low-pressure tires.

(a) In addition to the definitions in AS 16.05.940, the following definitions apply to 5 AAC 84 - 5 AAC 92:

(51) “snowmachine” means a motor vehicle of 850 pounds or less gross vehicle weight, primarily designed to travel over snow, and supported, in part by skis, belts, or tracks; “snowmachine” includes the motor vehicle commonly known as a snowmobile.